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SUBJECT: MEDIA REACTION JAPAN-CHINA RELATIONS  
TOKYO

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LEAD STORIES: Wednesday morning's Nihon Keizai front-  
paged a report from Moscow concerning plans by Russia and  
other five former Soviet republics to form a joint  
peacekeeping force that operate abroad.

¶1. "Ending the Vicious Circle of Japan-China Relations"  
An editorial in the business daily Nihon Keizai commented  
(3/15): "The Japanese and Chinese governments have  
exchanged harsh criticism since last month. The tension  
and distrust over PM Koizumi's visits to Yasukuni Shrine,  
natural gas development in the East China Sea, and Taiwan  
is so great that it could not possibly be resolved  
overnight. This makes it all the more important for each  
country to avoid making emotional statements and saying  
things that could invite misunderstanding in order to  
prevent the relationship from deteriorating further....  
Speaking to the press Tuesday in Beijing, Chinese Premier  
Wen laid out China's policy toward Japan for the time  
being in a concise manner, saying that Japan-China  
relations would not improve while PM Koizumi is in  
office. Mr. Wen also said it was not the Japanese people  
but the Japanese prime minister who is to blame. His  
remarks indicated that while Beijing will not agree to a  
summit before PM Koizumi steps down in September, the  
Chinese will continue the strategic dialogue at the vice-  
foreign-minister level, keeping channels of  
communications intact. The remarks also indicated China's  
intention to expand private-sector exchanges and economic  
cooperation so as to prevent the strained relations from  
adversely affecting economic and trade ties, as well as  
constraining future remarks by Koizumi's successor. At  
the root of the friction between Japan and China that has  
existed since the beginning of this century is a contest  
for power in East Asia that goes beyond Yasukuni. This is

all the more reason for the governments of the two countries to maintain a moderate diplomatic stance."

SCHIEFFER